

Mayor's Council on Disability
Chattanooga, Tennessee
Meeting Minutes
March 06, 2006

Chair Sandy Booher called the meeting of the Chattanooga Mayor's Council on Disability to order at 3:00pm, in room 1A of the Development Resource Center by welcoming everyone. She asked for introductions around the room: Sandy Booher with Moccasin Bend and chair of Council; Gina Turley with AIM Center; Jim Queen, manager of CARTA Care-A-Van; Virginia Piper, parent of two children with disabilities; Bea Lyons, with Chattanooga State representing Deaf and hard of hearing persons and vice chair of the Council; Dr. Rick Rader, director of the Habilitation Center at Orange Grove Center and also adjunct professor of human exceptionality at UTC; Karl Epperson, member of the Council; Jill Hindman, member of Executive Committee of the Council; and Jennifer Nichols, who is working on special project at Signal Centers.

Bea Lyons presented the minutes for the February 06, 2006 meeting that were approved with corrections. Copies of the approved January meeting minutes were also provided.

Molly Littleton from signal Centers, one of the TTAP centers across the state, introduced Kevin Wright, Executive Director of the Tennessee Technology Access Department in Nashville. TTAD is a statewide organization serving all citizens with disabilities. Kevin stated that Chattanooga is one of the more accessible cities in the downtown area that he has visited. He provided contact information to the Council: web site: www.state.tn.us/humanserv/ttap_index.htm; his phone number is 615/313-5183; and his e-mail address is kevin.r.wright@state.tn.us.

Old Business:

Matt Lea, Liaison to the Mayor's Office, reported on plans for accessibility workshop for City Codes Enforcement inspectors. The Council will need to talk with the chief inspectors to make plans for training. While the city is in the midst of remodeling and renovation,

the inspectors want to include accessibility issues in the plan. Matt will provide contact information so the Council can move along in its plans for training.

Ms. Booher shared an update of prospective Council members. There were five new members present giving the Council a total of twelve members and working toward goal of fifteen members. Additional letters have been sent to agencies within the Chattanooga area to recruit members of the Council. The Council will be comprised of members representing all disabilities from diverse backgrounds.

New Business:

Chair Booher led a discussion of a mission statement for the Council. The Chattanooga Mayor's Council on Disability is patterning some items from the Knoxville Advisory Council that has been functioning for twenty years. Jill Hindman read, " Council on Disability Issues (CODI) was presented by resolution R-100-84 of the Council of the city of Knoxville, Tennessee, on June 06, 1984, and amended June 14, 1989, for the following purposes: A) to serve as an advisory group to provide direction and guidance to the mayor of Knoxville and the Knoxville City Council in matters concerning persons with disabilities, and B) to promote coordination, communication and cooperation in working toward common goals concerning persons with disabilities."

Dr. Rick Rader presented two alternative statements to be considered in development of the mission statement. One says, "The Chattanooga Mayor's Council on Disability recognizes that our community, our city, our society is enriched by the full participation, contribution and inclusion of all its citizens and is mandated to realize and insure those dignified aspirations. The second states, "The Chattanooga Mayor's Council on Disability recognizes that our community, our city, our society is enriched by the full participation, contribution and inclusion of all its citizens and is mandated/dedicated to achieving those realizations (alternates, outcomes, endpoints, rights)"

Comments about suggested wording were made. Dr. Rader will seek advice from Dr. Anderson at UTC about appropriate mission statement wording and report back to the chair by e-mail. The mission statement will be finalized at the officers meeting to be held in two weeks.

Karl Epperson introduced a visitor, Carol McClure, from the Jaycee Towers where she works as service coordinator. Her goal is to give people in their building as much independence as they can through providing human service programs.

Next the Council discussed and developed a priority list of projects to present to the Mayor's Office. This list will be comprised of important issues and concerns that the Mayor's Office with assistance from the Council will use as a guide for planning of future projects. The following suggestions were made:

- 1) Public awareness, i.e. visits to schools to share with students what it is like to live with a disability. Jennifer Nichols' special project of producing storytelling videos through interview with person with disabilities will be shared with teachers and students in the schools.
- 2) Employment of persons with disabilities, i.e. Employment Consortium addressing the lack of employment for folks with disabilities in the Chattanooga area.
- 3) City Codes Enforcement Training and Workshop
- 4) Council to create link to the city's web site to provide on-going update on the community and what is happening.
- 5) Transportation Issues
- 6) Recreational and Leisure Activities at the Imax or Tivoli Theatre, i.e. allowing assistance givers to have free access to activities
- 7) Access for all citizens to the Chattanooga City Council meetings, i.e. listening systems for hard of hearing persons.

- 8) Create an Office of Disability Affairs within the Mayor's Office to handle concerns and issues; a centralized location with a specific contact person and dedicated phone number and e-mail address will facilitate process of accessibility of all citizens.
- 9) Effective Communication and provision of mechanism for persons with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations for city-wide events; currently there is no place on the invitations/forms for making requests.
- 10) For emergency response teams, having a confidential registry of persons with disabilities living within certain homes, etc. (Fire Department has that capability now; perhaps a community outreach director.) Mr. Queen offered sharing the CARTA ADA eligible client listing to the city as a start for such a registry.
- 11) Training for Fire Department and Police Department people in how to deal with various types of disabilities, especially cognitive and mental health issues along with physical and sensory disabilities.
- 12) Evacuation Shelters in time of major disaster need to be made accessible for persons with disabilities; this can be included within the Emergency Management planning. (Victoria Freeman with the Chattanooga Homeless Coalition runs a database for the city where they are looking at our software.)

Matt Lea presented an update of Go-Fest plans for September 30, 2006, 12:00noon until 6:00pm, at the First Tennessee Pavilion. [Go-Fest date has since been changed to October 14, 2006.] Friends of the Festival will be responsible for the event. The Council can play an important part in organization and ensuring accessibility for all that participate. The Go-Fest Planning Committee would welcome any help from community agencies, hospitals and especially this Council. The next meeting of the Go-Fest Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, March 22, at 10:00am. Contact will be made with Jaycee Towers, several complexes in the Golden Gateway, Dogwood Manor, and others to include them in planning. Matt will be meeting

with the schools and special education teachers to involve children in the event this year.

Chair Booher reported on new assignments to committees. The Council members discussed plans for the Press Conference and Media Kickoff set for Monday, April 03, 2006, at 10:30am, in Room 1A, at the Development Resource Center. Details will be covered in the next officers meeting. Matt suggested having agencies display in the lobby to publicize all types of disability awareness.

Shannon Alley introduced herself and the Miss Wheelchair Organization and offered their services to the Council. They plan to participate in Go-Fest.

Bea Lyons stated that her Letter to the Editor was published February 23, on the topic of voting accessibility and read it to the group. Mention was made that it would be appropriate to publish another letter introducing members of the Council and sharing what the group is doing. Within that letter it would be important to mention the April 03 press conference.

There will be a regular meeting of the Chattanooga Mayor's Council on Disability immediately following the Mayor's Press Conference on April 03, 2006. Meeting was adjourned at 4:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bea Lyons

Beatrice Lyons, Vice Chair/Acting Secretary
Mayor's Council on Disability

